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# AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

## STUDENT REPORT

A SURVEY OF STUDIES ON FACTORS  
AFFECTING AIR FORCE PROFESSIONAL  
MILITARY EDUCATION

MAJOR DANIEL P. BANGS

86-0190

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**REPORT NUMBER** 86-0190

**TITLE** A SURVEY OF STUDIES ON FACTORS AFFECTING AIR FORCE  
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

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<p>There have been many studies done on USAF Professional Military Education (PME) since its inception in the mid 1940s, and it is anticipated that many more studies will be done in the future. This report examines what studies have been done in four recurring areas of PME: structure, eligibility requirements, timing of attendance, and target audience. It is meant to be a reference source that can save many hours of research to people doing future studies. This report devotes a chapter to each of these areas and presents a brief chronological synopsis of studies from 1946 to 1985 that examined these areas.</p>			
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## PREFACE

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The author of this study worked closely during 1985 with a committee tasked to examine ways to improve Professional Military Education (PME) at Air University. While working with that committee, the author became aware that many of the issues being discussed had been the subject of numerous previous studies. There were four topics in particular that seemed to recur throughout the many studies. These topics were structure, eligibility requirements, timing of attendance, and target audience. The author was frustrated that there was no single source document that covered these specific areas. Major Glen Kendrick, an ACSC student in 1980, produced an excellent study that gave synopses of all available PME studies since 1947. This served as a starting point for this project, along with studies done since 1980 and some earlier studies not included in Major Kendrick's report. The author has attempted to produce a study that will be of use to future PME researchers by examining what previous studies have been done on these four specific areas.

The main source for these studies was the Plans and Programs Deputate at Air University Headquarters, with additional assistance from the Air University Historian's office.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The author is an Air Force officer with over ten years of experience as an airlift pilot. His interest in Professional Military Education (PME) stems from practical and academic experience in the area of education. His undergraduate degree is in Education and he spent two years teaching American History in public high school in New York State. His graduate degree is also in Education, which he utilized as a Section Commander and Curriculum Division Chief at Squadron Officer School (SOS). He also served on the staff at Air University Headquarters as the Chief of Officer PME (SOS), where he worked on a major study to revise PME at Air University. He attended SOS in 1976 and completed the ACSC Seminar Program in 1980.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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REPORT NUMBER 86-0190

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR DANIEL P. BANGS, USAF

TITLE A SURVEY OF STUDIES ON FACTORS AFFECTING  
AIR FORCE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

I. Purpose: Since 1946, there have been over 200 individual studies on various aspects of Air Force Professional Military Education (PME). These studies have looked at many different areas, but there are some topics that seem to be constantly reexamined. These topics of structure, eligibility requirements, timing of attendance, and target audience have been examined over and over again during the last 40 years, but there is no single source document that describes how the attitudes toward them have varied. My purpose is to provide a report of what previous studies have been done on each of these four topics.

II. Problem: It appears that while many studies have been done on Air Force PME since 1946, few researchers have taken the time to fully examine what has been previously discussed on a particular topic. Many of the same ideas that have been proposed and subsequently rejected are again resurrected because the authors are apparently not aware of the existing literature. This results in a great loss of resources and manhours.

III. Findings: Although there have been over 200 studies of Air Force PME, the basics have not changed much since 1946. The initial three-tier structure is still with us, although the length of the schools has varied slightly. We still agree



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that only our best officers should have the opportunity to attend, but we no longer restrict attendance to regular officers only. We have decided that age or standardized test scores are not relevant, but we do agree that Squadron Officer School (SOS) is for our junior officers, Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) is for our intermediate officers, and Air War College (AWC) is for our colonels and lieutenant colonels. The largest point of contention presently concerns ACSC. The current feeling among many people is that we need to get officers there earlier in their careers to educate them prior to their assumption of command and staff duties.

The largest factor in the flow of PME seems to have been the fluctuations caused by the Korean and Vietnam Wars. These conflicts with their associated increases in personnel greatly altered some of the concepts of PME. Schools were temporarily closed and/or drawn down and class sizes varied greatly. The influx of large reserve forces caused the idea of educating only regular officers to be abandoned and forced the personnel planners and educators to rethink their ideas of PME.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Shortly after the end of World War II the War Department established some initial guidelines for the development of a professional military education (PME) system for its commissioned officers. Since then there have been numerous studies on various aspects of PME. Many of the original ideas have proven sound and remained intact while others have been altered time and time again. The conditions of the time have often driven changes in the programs. Such factors as the Korean and Vietnam Wars, pilot retention rates, and availability of funds have caused changes over the years. Changes in philosophy on the needs and importance of PME have also caused the system to be changed. The primary areas that are continuously examined seem to be structure, eligibility requirements, timing of attendance, and target audience. While there have been many studies that have looked at some or all of these topics, there does not seem to have been a concentrated attempt to categorize these studies by subject area. In 1980 Major Glen A. Kendrick, an Air Command and Staff College student, published an annotated bibliography of all available studies from 1947 through 1979. I found this to be an excellent starting point in an attempt to organize the studies into the four primary areas I mentioned.

#### Objective

The objective of this project is to present a single source document that describes what major research projects have been done on four major areas of PME: structure, eligibility requirements, timing of attendance, and target audience. The result should be a starting point for future studies on these particular areas. Future researchers with an interest in a particular area should be able to use this document to direct them to the original source.

#### Limitations

This project will be limited to unclassified material available at Air University Library and Air University Headquarters. It will cover only discussions of Air Force PME and will concentrate on resident schools rather than non-resident programs.

### Organization of Report

Although there is a great deal of overlap between the four primary areas to be considered, I deal with them in three separate chapters. I address the topic of structure in Chapter Two, eligibility requirements in Chapter Three, and the final two areas of timing of attendance and target audience in Chapter Four. I combine these last two because of their close relationship. In each chapter I present a brief synopsis of the appropriate reports in chronological order. At the conclusion of each chapter I summarize and describe the present status of that particular area.

## CHAPTER TWO

### STRUCTURE OF USAF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

When I use the term structure, I am referring to the topic of how many phases of PME there should be, how long they should last, and when they should occur. Although there have not been many radical changes in these areas since the original inception of Air Force PME, there have been many proposals for change. From the original report of the Gerow Board in 1946 to PME studies currently in progress, many ideas have been proposed. Minor changes have resulted, but the original structure is basically unchanged.

February 1946, Report of War Department Military Education Board on Educational System for Officers of the Army (Gerow Board), War Department, 83 pages

Annex Ten of the report specifically addressed the Army Air Forces and laid the framework upon which the structure of Air University was built. The board's purpose was to prepare a plan for the post war education of officers of the Army. They dealt only with a system for Army officers, not with enlisted personnel or Naval officers, and were careful to stress that they were concerned with professional military education rather than specialist training. The board members proposed a three-tier structure beginning with a basic course designed for all junior officers between their 1st and 4th years of commissioned service. This basic school was named Air Tactical School. It was 5 months long and provided initial formal staff and command schooling in preparation for future specialized study. The second phase of PME was referred to as "advanced" and offered two separate tracks. The scientifically oriented officers would attend the Air Institute of Technology, while the rest of the officer force would be eligible to attend Air Command and General Staff School. Both schools were 10 months long and officers were eligible to attend 2 years after completing Air Tactical School. The purpose of the school was to provide capable commanders and staff officers for employment at group, wing, and unit level. The third and final phase was known as "college" and was officially titled Air College. In order to attend this 10-month course, an officer had to be a graduate of Air Command and General Staff School. The school's purpose was to train officers for command and staff duty at wing level or higher.

October 1947, The Educational and Training Program of the United States Air Force, Headquarters USAF, 225 pages

This is a brief article by Major General David W. Schlatter, Deputy Commanding General for Education, Air University. It is helpful in that he reviews the purpose of the various PME schools. In his review we note that two additional, optional schools have been added to the original three-tier structure. These schools, the Air Force School of Aviation Medicine and the Air Force Special Staff School, are more specialized and are outside of the three-tier structure. The Air Force School of Aviation Medicine was moved to San Antonio, Texas, in 1950 and the Air Force Special Staff School, which was located in Selma, Alabama, was deactivated the same year. In October 1950 Squadron Officer Course was begun at Maxwell AFB. This new school which was intended for junior officers was a combination of the recently deactivated Air Force Special Staff School and Air Tactical School.

January 1950, Report of the USAF Military Education Board on the Professional Education System for USAF Officers, USAF Military Board (Fairchild Board), 42 pages

This was the first true study of the United States Air Force's professional military education (PME) system. The board was chaired by General Muir S. Fairchild and their purpose was to assess the present status and future needs of Air Force PME. The actual structure of PME had not changed since 1947 with the exception that the Air Institute of Technology was no longer considered part of the professional military education, and the main area the report covered was timing of attendance with only a brief mention of structure. In their final report they recommended that the present structure remain intact, but that the mission statements of the Air Tactical School and the Air Command and Staff School be altered slightly.

April 1963, Factors Involved in Determining the Appropriate Structure of the PME System, Headquarters Air University, 28 pages

This paper was developed by a task group at Air University Headquarters. Their purpose was to provide information to assist in evaluating proposals on the structure of PME. The board members reviewed previous studies on PME, approved of the existing three-tier

structure, and listed four primary factors to be considered in deciding on the appropriate structure. The four factors were Air Force requirements, Air Force career progression system, Air Force resources, and correlation with other education programs.

July 1966, Officer Education Study, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, 592 pages (3 volumes)

This study was performed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Manpower and was concerned with the professional military education systems and postcommission academic programs of all four branches of the armed forces. This is an extensive study which seems to be very well done. An extensive amount of documentation and support material is included in this three-volume study. While it does not make any judgment on the structure of Air Force PME, it does compare the structure of all services' PME systems. The study group recognized four states of PME: entry, first professional, second professional, and third professional. They categorized Air Force PME as a three-stage system beginning with Squadron Officer School (SOS) as a first professional level course. Their primary concern with the Air Force system was that it needed to be more extensive, especially at the second professional level where they believed the Air Force needed to educate more of its officers. A final point made was that while many studies have been made on the past and present status of PME, we needed a comprehensive study on the future of the system.

March 1976, Report of a Study on Officer PME Policy, Headquarters USAF/DPP, 75 pages (with annex)

This report is a combination of two separate studies, one by Air University and the other by Headquarters Air Force Personnel Staff. The studies were done in response to a report on the turbulence caused by permanent change of station (PCS) moves. The purpose was to determine if the existing PME system needed to be retained in its present format or if changes could be made to lessen the costs. The final result was a report that listed 12 possible alternatives for the structure of PME. These 12 alternatives included both two- and three-tier approaches: SOS course lengths of 11 or 14 weeks and Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) programs of 14 weeks, 5 months, 10 months, or merger with Air War College (AWC). The AWC alternatives were to remain the same length or to merge with ACSC. The study's final recommendation was that the present system should be

retained if conditions permitted. If it was not possible to retain the current system, then they recommended that ACSC be reduced to 5 months or be combined with AWC.

February 1980, Officer PME Study, Headquarters Air University, 131 pages

This internal AU study was done to address the concerns of the low pilot retention rates of the time, the loss of middle management in the support areas, and the growth of the junior officer force. The question the study dealt with was how these factors affected PME and what possible changes might be needed. The study proposed 13 possible alternatives that were primarily concerned with the length of SOS and ACSC. They looked at SOS course lengths that ranged from 8 weeks to 14 weeks and an ACSC course of either 20 weeks or 40 weeks. Other proposals called for the elimination of SOS or ACSC. The final recommendation was that SOS be reduced to an 8-1/2 week course and that ACSC and AWC not be changed. If additional constraints required further change, they recommended making SOS 14 weeks long and either eliminating ACSC or shortening it to 20 weeks. Subsequent to this study SOS was shortened to 8-1/2 weeks. ACSC and AWC were not changed.

February 1985, PME Faculty Enhancement Task Force Report, Headquarters Air University, 23 pages (with annexes)

The report is the product of an Air University study group formed at the direction of the Air University Commander, Lieutenant General Thomas C. Richards. The group was originally tasked to examine ways in which PME could be improved at Air University, and they produced a hypothetical model for PME which became Appendix Two to the report. The report is a philosophical statement of what PME should be. In the discussion of structure the report advocates prerequisite gates for each of the three resident schools. These gates would be completion of an associate nonresident course.

#### Summary

Since 1946 the structure of Air Force PME has changed very little. Some of the early programs, like Air Tactical School and Air Force Special Staff School, no longer exist in their original form but have been replaced. The three-tier structure that came into being with the inception of Squadron Officer Course in 1950 is still with us. The names of the

schools and the length of the courses have varied, but not the structure. The issue that is frequently surfaced in this area is the length of the courses, but the only school that has appreciably changed its course length is SOS. It appears to me that the studies have gone through three phases as they looked at the structure of PME. The initial phase was one of inception in which basic ideas on the role of PME were examined. This period seems to have started with the Gerow Board in 1946 and lasted until the late 1950s. During this period we saw the idea for the three-tier structure evolve and various other ideas concerning technical education and training courses were gradually separated out. The second phase lasted from the late 1950s until the early 1970s and seems to have been concerned with basic approval of the three-tier structure and a validation of the appropriateness of the existing structure. There were no major proposals for drastic change but rather some calls to look into the future and determine if the structure would continue to be appropriate. The final phase starts in the early 1970s and continues into the present and is marked by the recurring question of whether or not the schools are the right length. ACSC and SOS have been affected most by these recent studies. The question of the appropriate length for ACSC does not seem to go away and as a result we have seen various proposals calling for its reduction, elimination, or combination with SOS. Each study finally seems to validate the necessity of leaving ACSC in its present form. It is SOS that has seen actual change as a result of the studies. The course length has been changed twice during this last phase and it too has faced proposals to eliminate it or combine it with ACSC.



## CHAPTER THREE

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR USAF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

The question of who should be eligible to attend the PME schools has been discussed and studied many times over the last 40 years. Such topics as rank, prerequisites, career fields, and completion of previous PME have been looked at in various studies with numerous recommendations resulting. This chapter will describe all available studies that mentioned any type of eligibility requirements.

February 1946, Report of War Department Military Education Board on Educational System for Officers of the Army (Gerow Board), War Department, 83 pages

As described in Chapter Two, the purpose of the Gerow Board was to construct a framework for the post war education of Army officers. The board wrote specific criteria for each proposed school covering such areas as mission, scope, objectives, length of course, and prerequisites for attendance. The only requirement prescribed for Air Tactical School was that an officer have at least 1 year of active duty. To attend Air Command and General Staff School officers had to be graduates of Air Tactical School who had served 2 years of active duty since graduation. In order to attend the other intermediate school, Air Institute of Technology, an officer needed at least 3 years of commissioned service and completion of a regular or associate course of Air Command and General Staff School. For the final level of PME, Air College, officers had to be graduates of the Air Command and General Staff School. Selection for the intermediate and senior level schools was to be made by a central selection committee while officers attending Air Tactical School would be chosen at a lower unspecified level.

January 1950, Report of the USAF Military Education Board on the Professional Education System for USAF Officers, USAF Military Education Board (Fairchild Board), 42 pages

This was the first general review of Air Force PME and it was very satisfied with the status of the various programs. The report reaffirmed the priority of

educating regular officers in the PME schools with a target of sending 100 percent of the regular officers to Air Tactical School, 60 percent to Air Command and Staff School, and 25 percent to Air War College. They agreed that 100 percent of all junior officers should attend Air Tactical School, but recognized that this would be a difficult objective to achieve. It is interesting to note that this report, which was prepared in 1949 and published in January 1950, assumed that all these targets could be met by the end of 1951.

November 1956, Report of the USAF Educational Conference (Rawlings Board), Department of the Air Force, 106 pages

General Thomas D. White, Vice Chief of Staff, USAF, directed that this periodic review of PME be conducted in 1956. The boardmembers were general officers from the Air Staff and most major commands. They did not discuss rank as a criteria for attending one of the three PME schools, but they did agree that only regular officers should be allowed to attend, although they did allow that reserve officers who would most likely be selected for a regular commission could also attend. The board discussed the possibility of administering a standardized test to all officers and using the results as partial criteria for selection to intermediate service school. While they thought this might be feasible for use in the Command and Staff School, they did not think it should be used for the Air War College. They eventually decided not to use it in either school. The final recommendations were that a central selection board should continue to choose officers for Command and Staff School and Air War College and that nominees for the Air War College should be more carefully screened.

December 1959, Report of the USAF Educational Conference, USAF Educational Board, 91 pages

This conference was convened to comply with the suggestion of the 1956 USAF Educational Conference that a review be conducted in 3 years. The report was critical of the existing eligibility criteria which they believed was leading to a student population situation that denied attendance to older officers. A 1958 policy change had lowered the rank for Air War College students from colonel to lieutenant colonel and had set a maximum age limit of 40. Similarly, Air Command and Staff College lowered the rank structure for its students from lieutenant colonels and majors to majors and captains and set a maximum age limit of 39. The report recommended that colonels not be excluded from attending

Air War College and that the age restriction be dropped. The rank structure for Air Command and Staff College was not questioned, but it was recommended that the age restriction be dropped. I could not find any documents that explained why the age restrictions had been set and the rank structure lowered in 1958.

May 1962, Air University Views on Selection for PME Schools, Headquarters Air University, 14 pages

This report was prepared by the Air University (AU) staff in reply to a tasking from the Director of Personnel Planning, Headquarters USAF. AU was specifically tasked to examine the question of who should attend PME schools. The staff examined previous studies such as the Gerow and Fairchild reports and compared them to the existing situation. They found the greatest problem was with Squadron Officer School (SOS). They did not believe that SOS was educating the correct type of officer. Only 25 percent of the students held regular commissions, while over 60 percent of the eligible regular officers had not attended SOS. The study proposed that only captains should attend and that 80 percent of the students should hold regular commissions. They also believed that tighter control was needed in the student selection process. They were opposed to the decentralized process and recommended that selection be done at the major command headquarters rather than at lower levels. The study was generally pleased with the type of student at the Air War College (AWC) and Air Command and Staff College (ACSC). At that time colonels and colonel selectees attended AWC, while majors and major selectees attended ACSC.

May 1969, Professional Military Education Program, Headquarters United States Air Force, 25 pages

This document was prepared for and sent to Air Force Consolidated Base Personnel Offices to clarify recently implemented policies governing selection of officers to attend intermediate and senior level PME schools. The increasing need of officers to serve in Southeast Asia had greatly decreased the number of officers available to attend PME schools. Class sizes at Air War College, Air Command and Staff College, and Squadron Officer School were reduced by as much as 70 percent. Colonels and colonel selectees under 47 years of age were eligible to attend Air War College providing they had been at their present station for at least 1 year. Air Command and Staff College was available to majors and major selectees with no age restriction imposed.

Squadron Officer School was the most restrictive of the three schools. Only captains under 32 years of age were eligible to attend. Additionally, only those captains serving in the CONUS could be selected.

March 1976, Report of a Study on Officer PME Policy, Directorate of Personnel Programs, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, Headquarters United States Air Force, 75 pages

This periodic review of PME took a close look at many aspects and made some new recommendations in the area of eligibility criteria. They recommended that Squadron Officer School students be selected from a pool of captains with regular commissions or captains who had been offered Indefinite Reserve Status. The actual selection of officers to attend Squadron Officer School would be made by the major commands. No specific recommendations were made on eligibility criteria for Air War College and Air Command and Staff College.

September 1979, Senior Service Schools Selection/Designation Process--Historical Study--Classes of 47-80, Headquarters Air University, 16 pages (with appendices)

This study is a detailed, very extensive study of the student populations of Air War College from 1947 through the class of 1980. The study was directed by General Roberts, Commander, Air Training Command, because of his concern with the relative lack of success of Air War College graduates. In the late 70s statistics showed that not only were Air War College graduates not being promoted to general officer ranks at an expected level, but many lieutenant colonel students and graduates were not being promoted to colonel. The study made no final recommendations but noted that many recent policy changes should help solve some of the problems. It was agreed by AF/MPCR that a greater percentage of rated officers would be selected to attend Air War College and that the school would be considered on an equal basis with the other senior service schools. AF/MPCR also agreed to screen records much more carefully to ensure that only officers with the highest probability of promotion would be selected to attend.

February 1980, Officer PME Study, Headquarters Air University, 131 pages

This study was directed by AF/MP and was performed by the staff of Air University. Its purpose was to review Air Force PME programs and present alternatives to guide

them through the 1980s. The eligibility criteria for Squadron Officer School had been fluctuating in the late 1970s on the issue of attendance by first lieutenants. Captains and first lieutenants had been eligible to attend through most of the 1970s but in 1978 the policy was changed to allow only captains and captain selectees. In January 1980 the policy was again reversed to allow first lieutenants and captains. The board fully supported this decision and the USAF Personnel Plan of 1979 goal that all career officers should attend Squadron Officer School. Although they supported this goal, they realized that resource limitations would prohibit its attainment. The attendance rate for eligible officers had risen from 35 percent in 1974 to slightly over 50 percent in 1978, but was projected to decline to approximately 40 percent by 1989. The study did express approval of the current selection policy for students that was being done at major command headquarters level. The study made no specific eligibility criteria recommendations for Air Command and Staff School and Air War College. It did call for increased attendance opportunity at both schools in response to a recent trend showing a decrease in student populations.

September 1981, A Study of Eligibility Criteria for Air Force Officer PME, Headquarters Air University, 30 pages

This study considered two major PME issues. The first, on timing of attendance for Squadron Officer School, will be covered in the next chapter. The second issue was to make captains who had been nominated for promotion to major below the primary zone eligible to attend Air Command and Staff College. The study presented the argument that many officers were attending Air Command and Staff College after they had served in command and/or staff positions. As a result they were not receiving the education they needed early enough. Making Air Command and Staff College available to captains who had obviously proven their ability and potential would enable the Air Force to make better use of them for a longer time. This proposal was approved by the commander of Air Training Command and forwarded to Air Force Headquarters for final approval and implementation.

February 1985, PME Faculty Enhancement Task Force Report, Headquarters Air University, 23 pages

This report dealt primarily with ways to improve Air University through the enhancement of the faculty.

Appendix two to the report is a hypothetical model for professional military education. The model proposed an overall structure that requires completion of an associate program as a prerequisite for attending the resident program. Completion of each lower level of PME would be required prior to proceeding to the next level.

September 1985, PME Eligibility Initiatives, Headquarters Air University, 2 pages

The Commander of Air University, Lieutenant General Thomas C. Richards, sent this letter on PME issues to Lieutenant General Shaud, AF/DP. It contained six major proposals that General Richards requested General Shaud consider. Two of the proposals dealt directly with eligibility requirements for PME schools. The first recommended that all officers with more than 8 years of Total Active Federal Military Service (TAFMS) be prohibited from attending Squadron Officer School. The rationale was that many officers with prior enlisted time had already studied much of the material covered in Squadron Officer School as part of their noncommissioned officer (NCO) PME. Additionally, statistics showed that if these officers were eliminated from the eligibility pool, the attendance opportunity for the remaining eligibles would rise from 54 percent to 74 percent. The second proposal would require all below-the-zone promotees to majors to attend an intermediate service school within 2 years of selection. Research showed that as many as 15 percent of these officers never attended an intermediate service school. It was General Richards' feeling that these future leaders of the Air Force would benefit from attendance.

#### Summary

The basic eligibility requirements for attendance at the three PME schools have remained relatively constant since 1947. Basically, the lowest level has been for first lieutenants and captains, the intermediate level for majors, and the senior level for lieutenant colonels and colonels. The biggest fluctuations in policy have been caused by the lack of available officers due to the Korean War and the Vietnam War. These peaks and valleys in the size of the officer force made long term projections of PME requirements very difficult. We have seen such factors as age, rank, total years of service, standardized test performance, and regular or reserve status used as discriminators in the selection process. Many of these have come and gone and then come again. The next chapter on timing of attendance and target audience will touch closely on much of this material.

The initial purpose of PME seemed to be the education of our top officers. Because of this, the initial criteria for the three levels was to ensure that only our finest regular officers attended. SOS was to be for our entire regular junior officer force and was to be a prerequisite for attendance at ACSC, which in turn would be a prerequisite for AWC. The early PME planners seemed to envision an AWC student population of only regular officers who had attended the lower two levels. War and other circumstances eventually altered this thinking, but it wasn't until the mid-60s that the concept of a student body comprised exclusively of regular officers was finally acknowledged as unattainable. The Korean and Vietnam Wars caused the most problems for the PME planners as the pools of available regular officers were drastically reduced, while the total number of officers was greatly increased. Class sizes were lowered and, in some cases, the schools were temporarily closed.

While some transient criteria have been discussed and/or applied over the years, such as age restrictions and standardized testing, the two most constant factors have been rank and years of commissioned service. While both have fluctuated somewhat over the years, they are the only ones that survive today from the initial concept of the Gerow Board.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TIMING OF ATTENDANCE AND TARGET AUDIENCE FOR USAF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

Closely linked to the topic of eligibility requirements is the question of who should attend Air Force PME schools. It has been studied many times since 1946 and the opinions have varied. Usually the question has centered on the idea of whether or not all officers should attend and what the correct rank for students in a particular school should be. The philosophy has changed many times, usually based on the existing force structure. A topic that is closely linked to this is timing of attendance. At what point in their careers should officers attend the various PME schools? Both of these topics are similar to, and often interrelated with, the subject of eligibility criteria that I examined in the last chapter. I also found some overlap among the areas of structure that I examined in the first chapter and timing of attendance.

February 1946, Report of War Department Military Education Board on Educational System for Officers of the Army (Gerow Board), Headquarters War Department, 83 pages

This study, which is the cornerstone on which our PME system was built, is rather vague in its description of who should attend and when. It makes a point that the resident system is intended primarily for regular officers although some provisions for attendance by reserve officers are made. The report states that the majority of regular officers should attend PME schools, but it is not specific on numbers or percentages of attendees. The only mention on timing of attendance is in a discussion of the Air Tactical School, the first level of PME. The study recommends attendance between the 1st and 4th years of commissioned service. Because this was the first step in the development of the Air Force PME system, few specifics are addressed. Later reports and studies are more precise in their recommendations.



January 1950, Report of the USAF Military Education Board on the Professional Educational System for USAF Officers (Fairchild Report), Headquarters Department of the Air Force, 42 pages

This was the first major report on the Air Force PME system since its inception. The committee members attempted to update policy and give more specific guidance on how the system should operate. The general idea was still that resident PME was intended for regular officers. The goals were for 100 percent attendance of all regular officers at Air Tactical School, 60 percent attendance at Air Command and Staff School, and 25 percent attendance at Air War College. The board acknowledged that these goals were desirable, but probably unrealistic. They made recommendations on actions to be taken in order to reach these objectives, but acknowledged that the suggestions were impractical. The suggestions included doubling or tripling the number of classes per year and drastically increasing the number of students in each class. The board viewed these as temporary measures that were needed to reach the above stated percentages. They believed that the attendance window for Air War College should be during the 14th or 15th year, for the Air Command and Staff School during the 9th or 10th year, and Air Tactical School during the 4th or 5th year. In order to reach the objective of 100 percent attendance by regular officers at the Air Tactical School, they recommended temporarily expanding the eligibility window to 1 through 9 years and then gradually restricting it to the 4 through 5 year point.

November 1956, Report of the USAF Educational Conference (Rawlings Report), Headquarters Department of the Air Force, 106 pages

This report was the product of a periodic review of Air Force PME conducted by Air Force Headquarters. It reconfirmed the goals of 100 percent attendance by regular officers at Squadron Officer School, attendance by 60 percent of the regular officers at Air Command and Staff College, and 25 percent at Air War College. The report acknowledged that it was not possible to reach these goals with the current class sizes and recommended increasing the number of students at all three schools. In addressing timing of attendance the report recommended that first lieutenants and captains attend Squadron Officer School between the 3rd and 8th year of commissioned service. Major selectees, majors, and lieutenant colonels should attend no later than the 17th year of commissioned service, and lieutenant colonels

and colonels should attend Air War College by the 21st year. The board members emphasized that ideally officers should attend Air Command and Staff College and Air War College as early as possible and that the above listed restrictions were absolute maximums.

December 1959, Report of the USAF Educational Conference, USAF Educational Board, 91 pages

This report is a rather broad non-specific recommendation of what PME should be. In describing the role of PME in an officer's career the report lists four main guidelines. It states that an officer should be trained for a job and educated for a career; only the most outstanding officers should be selected for schools because of limitation of class size; officers should complete education and training as soon as possible in their careers; education and training should be consistent with existing Air Force policy. In order to provide more officers with the opportunity to attend PME schools they recommended that Squadron Officer School continue to educate 3,000 officers a year; that Air Command and Staff College should aim to educate 1,000 per year; that Air War College increase its Air Force students from 110 to 150 per year.

May 1962, Air University Views on Selection for PME Schools, Headquarters Air University, 14 pages

This brief report, prepared by Air University, specifically addressed the questions of who should attend PME and when they should attend. The report took exception to the existing attendance window at Squadron Officer School which was 2-1/2 to 7-1/2 years and recommended that it be restricted to 3 to 6 years. They concurred with existing policy that all regular officers should attend but acknowledged that a more realistic goal would be attendance by 60 percent of the regular force. In order to accomplish even this reduced objective they recommended that the existing class size of 850 be increased to 1,000 for each of the 3 classes per year. A final recommendation was that Squadron Officer School in some form be mandatory for all officers. The report was much more brief in the discussion of Air Command and Staff College. It agreed with the existing target audience of majors and major selectees, but emphasized the importance of attending the school as soon as possible after selection to major. The report supported with the policy of primarily regular officers attending the school. The report was quite vague on the subject of Air War College students.

It stated that only the best colonel selectees should be allowed to attend. Nothing specific was addressed in terms of timing of attendance.

March 1963, Air University Plan for the Development of Air Force Professional Education 1963-1973, Air University Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff/Education, 66 pages

This 10-year plan for the development of Air University is significant in that it admitted for the first time that the goal of aiming PME primarily at regular officers was wrong. When the Gerow Board first devised Air Force PME in 1946 there was an assumption that the reserve force would not be serving for very long and therefore it was not important to provide them with PME. This 1963 report noted that there were over 62,000 reserve officers in the Air Force and that there should be no distinction between regular and reserve officers regarding PME opportunity. To achieve this the plan recommended increasing the size of the schools to make PME available to more officers and to make completion of PME in residence or by correspondence a requirement for promotion. Squadron Officer School would be required to become a major, Air Command and Staff College would be required for promotion to lieutenant colonel, and Air War College for colonel. The report recommended that Squadron Officer School in residence be made available to captains only during the 6th year of service. They would be selected during their 5th year for attendance during their 6th year. Likewise, majors would be selected to attend Air Command and Staff College during their 12th year and colonel selectees would attend Air War College during their 18th year. Early promotees would attend the appropriate school within a year of selection. The study stated that these seemed to be the optimum times to attend the individual schools.

September 1964, Professional Military Education for all Career Officers, Headquarters Air University, 10 pages

This study was done to determine the feasibility of requiring all Air Force officers to complete Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College. The study stated that all officers need continuing professional education throughout their careers in order to properly accept the responsibility that goes with increased rank. To ensure that officers obtained the proper education the report recommended that completion of appropriate PME in residence or by correspondence be required as a requirement for promotion. Squadron Officer School would be required

for promotion to major; Air Command and Staff College for promotion to lieutenant colonel; and Air War College for promotion to colonel.

May 1969, Professional Military Education Program Selection, Policies, Air Force Military Personnel Center (AFMPC), 25 pages

This document served as a summary of the current policies and procedures used to select officers to attend PME schools. It noted that regular and reserve captains should attend Squadron Officer School between the 3rd and 7th years and that, based on the existing force structure, 40 percent of the force would have the opportunity to attend. Air Command and Staff College attendance was limited to majors and major selectees with less than 15 years of commissioned service. The school was equipped to educate 18 percent of the eligible officers but because of the Vietnam War only 9 percent were attending. The Air War College student population consisted of colonels and colonel selectees with less than 23 years of commissioned service. There was no minimum stated but it encouraged attendance as early as possible. Since 1964 the opportunity for attendance had fluctuated between 25 and 40 percent.

September 1979, Senior Service Schools Selection/Designation Process - Historical Study - Classes of 47-80, Headquarters Air University

General Roberts, the Commander of Air Training Command, directed that this study be conducted because of his concern with a decrease in the quality of the Air War College in comparison to the other senior service schools. The study itself is a collection of data on each Air War College class since 1947. No recommendations or in depth analysis was done. I found it interesting because it serves as an excellent source of information on the trends that have shaped the student body at Air War College. Through the graphs and statistics presented, the reader can see the variations in policy on who should attend and when.

February 1980, Officer PME Study, Headquarters Air University, 131 pages

This review covered many aspects of officer PME and made 20 recommendations to improve it in the 1980s. Many of these recommendations specifically addressed the issues of who should attend PME schools. The review recommended that first lieutenants and captains attend

Squadron Officer School and that officers with prior service should not be prohibited from attending. For Air Command and Staff College it was recommended that the fluctuating student load be stabilized to allow 15 percent of the eligible officers to attend. It was similarly recommended that Air War College be consistently offered to 9 percent of the eligible lieutenant colonels and colonels.

September 1981, A Study of Eligibility Criteria for Air Force Officer PME, Headquarters Air University, 30 pages

This study was directed by the Commander of Air Training Command because of his concern that PME was occurring too late in an officer's career to fully benefit the Air Force and the officer. The conclusion to the report states that it is essential that officers receive PME at the most appropriate time. To accomplish this the report recommends two major changes. First, it recommended that the timing for attendance at Squadron Officer School be changed from 2 through 7 years to 2 through 5 years. The second recommendation was that Air Command and Staff College be available earlier in an officer's career. It specifically recommends making captains who are eligible for secondary zone promotion to major, candidates for attendance. The ultimate goal was to lower the average commissioned time for Air Command and Staff College students from 12.7 years to approximately 10 years.

February 1985, PME Faculty Enhancement Task Force Report, Headquarters Air University, 13 pages

Appendix two to this report is a hypothetical model of what PME should be. It concurs with the idea that officers need PME as early in their careers as possible. It recommends that nonrated officers attend Squadron Officer School in the 2nd to 4th year of commissioned service and rated officers in the 4th to 6th year. For Air Command and Staff College the model proposes that senior captains and majors attend in the 7th through 13th year. Finally, for Air War College it recommends that lieutenant colonels and colonels attend in the 14th through 22nd year.

September 1985, PME Eligibility Initiatives, Headquarters Air University, 2 pages

This letter from the Commander of Air University to Lieutenant General Shaud, HQ USAF/DP, addressed six

major PME initiatives which Air University (AU) supported. Three of these pertained to the topic of who goes when. The first re-raised the question of whether or not officers with prior enlisted service should attend Squadron Officer School (SOS). It was AU's feeling that much of the material taught in SOS had been covered in many of the NCO PME courses and that this coupled with the experience gained during enlisted service caused it to be a repetitive, inefficient use of time for the prior enlisted officers. The letter suggested that officers with more than 8 years TAFMS not attend SOS. The second issue was that all below the primary zone majors mandatorily attend an intermediate service school within 2 years of selection. AU's feeling was that these are our finest officers and that for various reasons as high as 20 percent of them never attend intermediate service school. In the opinion of AU this was a detriment to the school and the officer. The final proposal was to lower the average Total Active Federal Commissioned Service (TAFCS) time of Air Command and Staff College students by making the school available to senior captains. The proposal suggested lowering the average commissioned service time from the existing 12.7 years to 10 years. This would be done by selecting candidates to attend through a central selection process at the 8 year point. Surveys showed that over 70 percent of the students had served at major command headquarters or above prior to attending ACSC. The information they needed to be good commanders and/or staff officers was being received too late.

#### Summary

Throughout the last 40 years the answers to the question of who goes when have varied. Given the three-tier structure it has been generally accepted that the first school is intended for junior officers, the second school for mid-level officers, and the third for more senior officers. There have been minor fluctuations on this, but for the majority of the last 40 years Squadron Officer School educated captains and first lieutenants, Air Command and Staff College dealt with majors, and Air War College was for colonels and lieutenant colonels. The primary point of contention in the first 25 years was whether or not PME should be available to reserve officers. The thinking that prevailed was that only our finest career officers should attend PME and thus it was primarily regular officers who were sent, especially to our two most senior schools. The distinction of regular versus reserve faded during the 1960s and the philosophy became--send the best as early as possible. Squadron Officer School has varied slightly on the subject of timing of attendance. The minimum has remained at the 2- to 3-year point while the

maximum has been at the 6- to 7-year point. The timing for Air War College has also remained fairly consistent, but Air Command and Staff College has seen numerous recommendations in the recent past to lower its minimum attendance point to approximately the 9-year point and to aim more toward the senior captains. The basic philosophy on timing of attendance has been to educate career officers early in order to obtain more productive years from them.

It is interesting to note that the opinions on the importance of PME vary depending on who does the study. Studies done by groups outside of Air University seem to acknowledge the importance of PME, but temper this with the realization that it cannot be available to everybody. Resources and logistics prohibit the opportunity to educate all officers. Many of the studies done by Air University, however, seem to call for increasing the size of the schools and classes in order to offer PME to as broad an audience as possible. The AU studies are the ones that recommend that PME be mandatory and a prerequisite for promotion.

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